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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 000643

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/27/2016

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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH TURKISH IRAQ COORDINATOR

Classified By: AMBASSADOR ZALMAY KHALILZAD, REASONS 1.4 (C) (D).

¶1. (S//REL MNFI) SUMMARY. Turkey's Iraq Coordinator, Amb. Oguz Celikkol, visited Baghdad February 24-25 where he met separately with Pres. Talabani, PM Jaafari and the Ambassador. Topics discussed were the Golden Mosque bombing, Sadrists, Iranian influence, formation of the Iraqi government, Kurdish issues and PRTs. END SUMMARY

¶2. (S//REL MNFI) Turkey's Iraq Coordinator, Amb. Oguz Celikkol, visited Baghdad February 24-25 where he met individually with Talabani, Jaafari and the Ambassador. In his Feb. 25 meeting with Celikkol, the Ambassador began by reviewing the current political/security situation following the Golden Mosque attack. He told Celikkol we are not out of danger yet, but listed a number of positive steps the ITG has taken (curfew, formation of an investigative committee, weapons ban, etc.). The Ambassador added Jaysh al Mahdi (JAM) is still an issue. The Sadrists sometimes say the right things publicly, but not privately. He noted our continuing concern about JAM, and the outstanding warrant against Muqtada al-Sadr.

¶3. (S//REL MNFI) This led to discussion of Sadr's proposed visit to Turkey. Ambassador weighed in against such a visit, and hoped the GOT will take that into account. The Ambassador asked Celikkol to reflect in light of developments with Sadr in the past month, especially the indications of Iranian arrangements with Sadr, which we view negatively. He added that Abd-al-Aziz al-Hakim feels "jilted" by Iran over the process by which Jaafari was voted as the UIC's PM candidate. Some see Iran as trying to build a "Lebanon-like" Shi'a arrangement, with Hakim as Nabih Berri (Amal Movement) and Sadr as Nasrallah (Lebanese Hizballah). We are considering the position we should take vis--vis Sadr, but Jaafari must contain the Sadrists' irresponsible behavior, since they are his political allies now. We are also weighing in with Saudis, who seem to see Sadr as a "moderate," and we are advising Riyadh against giving him assistance. Celikkol stated that GOT has approved the Sadr visit in principle, but with no date. This decision was taken within the context of GOT policy to meet all sides of the political spectrum in Iraq; they will hear from him directly - but will not receive him beyond the Foreign Minister level, according to Celikkol. GOT will give him the right message, and will be in touch with AmEmbassy Ankara. Celikkol also noted the Jaafari visit has been arranged for Feb. 28. Celikkol reiterated the GOT's offer to host further Iraqi political meetings in Turkey if that would be useful.

¶4. (S//REL MNFI) Turning to Iraqi government formation, the

Ambassador talked about the need for national unity, and efforts to overcome mistrust among ethnic and sectarian groups. One vehicle is setting up baskets of ministries each headed by a DPM, so that several diverse groups participate in the sector (e.g., security, finance/oil, public services) rendering government operations more transparent to all. He noted misunderstandings about the USG position on who leads MOI and other ministries -- our view is that leaders must not have militia ties or sectarian loyalties (as opposed to not being of a particular faith or sect). We are investing a lot of money in MOI and MOD, and expect a positive return. Celikkol asked about a proposal to create a national security advisory council. The Ambassador replied that the Shi'a at first opposed this suggestion, but now agree that it could have a coordinating or advisory role. Celikkol also expressed the GOT's readiness to provide training for ISF, especially police training.

¶5. (S//REL MNFI) Celikkol then provided readouts of his meetings with Talabani and Kurdish leader Barzani. He had told Barzani he would visit Irbil to continue discussions. Celikkol said Talabani gave him some hope for the future, saying that there was too much push now for a Kirkuk referendum. Rather it should be delayed and needs a broader consensus on issues. Celikkol asserted that this matched Turkey's position. The Ambassador noted our position that there is time before resolving Kirkuk, but that he told Talabani of our displeasure with certain maps and unilateral steps we had seen. Celikkol said he intended to raise Kirkuk with Barzani in these terms, especially to give time for consensus to build.

¶6. (S//REL MNFI) The Ambassador asked about PKK

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developments. Celikkol said he will continue discussions with Barzani on the PKK, but that the Kirkuk issue is more important and more difficult. He noted that Kirkuk could be a trigger for violence as Samarra was. PKK is a bilateral issue that could be settled more easily. The Ambassador referred to possible steps such as negotiating a cease-fire, and said Talabani was favorable. The Ambassador added that, together with Talabani, he hoped to talk with Barzani in coming days.

¶7. (S//REL MNFI) Celikkol noted the GOT was working to assist in supplying additional electricity to northern Iraq. Once the GOT irons out some domestic legal issues regarding privatization (NFI), the intention is for a Turkish company to provide around 1200 MW of electricity to Iraq and to invest in Iraq's power grid.

¶8. (S//REL MNFI) The Ambassador raised the Consulate General Mosul visit in January, and offered that he thought it went well. Celikkol readily agreed. The Ambassador noted it is a good thing to set up a CG there, but advised that Turkey must ensure it is resourced properly.

¶9. (S//REL MNFI) Turning to Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT), the Ambassador asked about Turkish interest in contributing to a PRT. Celikkol assured us the GOT is strongly interested in going wherever the USG wants them. The Ambassador expressed his thanks for their support and flexibility, noting Turkey would bring a lot to the table and offered to put our experts in touch.

KHALILZAD